

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4972

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BTRA, BEXP, JA

SUBJECT: FOREIGN BUYERS GROUP -- TOYS

1. EMBASSY SEES GOOD MARKET POTENTIAL FOR U.S. TOYS IN JAPAN AND WISHES TO ORGANIZE TOY BUYERS GROUP TO TRAVEL TO A U.S. TOY SHOW. FOREIGN-MADE TOYS PRESENTLY OCCUPY SMALL PERCENTAGE OF MARKET IN JAPAN; AND WITHIN NON-S.E. ASIAN IMPORTS, GERMAN TOYS PREDOMINATE. "MONSTER" AND ACTION TOYS HAVE DOMINATED MARKET HERE FOR LONG TIME, BUT JAPANESE CONSUMER TASTES NOW CHANGING TOWARDS MORE CREATIVE AND DURABLE TOYS, E.G. WOODEN AND UNBRAKABLE TOYS, ACTION GAMES, CRAFTS AND HOBBIES, AND EDUCATIONAL TOYS. THIS CHANGE IN TASTE, TOGETHER WITH RISING COSTS IN JAPAN, OFFERS U.S. MAKERS NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITY.

2. MS. ATSUKO TATSUMI, EDITOR OF JAPAN TOY NEWS, SAYS THAT JAPANESE TOY BUYERS GROUPS TRAVEL TO NUREMBERG INT. TOY FAIR EVERY YEAR. SHE SAYS MANY BUYERS HAVE WANTED TO TRAVEL TO A U.S. TOY SHOW BUT HAVE NEVER HAD INFORMATION ABOUT U.S. SHOWS.

3. NIPPON MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES, INC., AGENT FOR US-PUBLISHED QTE TOYS UNQTE MAGAZINE, SAYS THAT JAPANESE BUYERS WHO TRAVELED TO AMERICAN TOY FAIR IN N.Y. IN PAST WERE REFUSED ADMITTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL SHOW ROOMS, EVEN THOUGH ADMITTE TO SHOW, ECAUSE THEY NO APPT'S WITH INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITORS. INCONTRAST, NUREMBERG

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FAIR IS VERY OPEN AND RECEPTIVE TO JAPANESE BUYERS.

THIS MIGHT ACCOUNT FOR PREVALENCE OF GERMAN TOYS AND
NEAR ABSENCE OF US TOYS AMONG JAPANESE IMPORTS.

4. AMERICAN TOY FAIR WILL BE HELD IN N.Y. FROM
FEB. 17-20 WITH PREVIEW SHOW FROM FEB. 10-16. THIS
FOLLOWS EUROPEAN SHOWS AT LONDON (JAN. 25-29),
NUREMBERG (FEB. 1-7) AND PARIS (FEB. 8-14) SO TIMING
IS RIGHT. M. TATSUMI SAYS SHE WILL ORGANIZE BUYERS
GROUP TO U.S. IF WE CAN OBTAIN INFO AND ASSURE
ADMITTANCE ARRANGEMENTS AT OTHER END.

5. THERE WILL BE NO POINT IN SENDING JAPANESE TOY BUYERS
GROUP, HOWEVER, IF N.Y. TOY FAIR MAINTAINS ITS
OR IF U.S. MAKERS DEMAND VOLUME PUR-
CHASES WHEN JAPANESE BUYERS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN
ESTABLISHING FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH
SMALLER INITIAL PURCHASES. IN SUCH A CASE, GROUP
WOULD BE ADVISED TO TRAVEL TO ALTERNATIVE SHOW, SUCH
AS REGIONAL SHOW IN ATLANTA OR DALLAS. THESE SHOWS,
HOWEVER, DO NOT FOLLOW EUROPEAN TOY SHOWS SO SIZE OF
BUYERS GROUP WOULD PROBABLY BE SMALLER. IN ADDITION,
BUYERS WOULD PREFER ATTEND N.Y. SHOW.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: COMMERCE IS REQUESTED TO CONSULT WITH
WALTER ARMATYS, EXEC. DIR. OF N.Y. SHOW AT
212-675-1141 TO DETERMINE ADVISABILITY OF SENDING
JAPANESE BUYERS GROUP TO AMERICAN TOY FAIR. IF REAC-
TION IS NEGATIVE, PLEASE PROPOSE ALTERNATIVE SHOW WHICH
IS SUITABLE FOR BUYERS GROUP. COMMERCE ALSO REQUESTED
TO SEND GENERAL INFO AND REGISTRATION INFO FOR SELECTED
SHOW.
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